Genocide

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Genocide is the systematic destruction of all or a significant part of a linguistic, ethnic, religious or national group. Well-known examples of genocide include the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, the Bosnian genocide, and the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

The duty of the survivor is to bear testimony to what happened . . . You have to warn people that these things can happen, that evil can be unleashed. Race hatred, violence, idolatries—they still flourish.
~ Elie Wiesel

Quotes

- Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities. Our government has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens while at the same time bending over backwards to placate the West Pak[istan] dominated government and to lessen any deservedly negative international public relations impact against them. Our government has evidenced what many will consider moral bankruptcy,(...) But we have chosen not to intervene, even morally, on the grounds that the Awami conflict, in which **unfortunately the overworked term genocide is applicable**, is purely an internal matter of a sovereign state. Private Americans have expressed disgust. We, as professional civil servants, express our dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interests here can be defined and our policies redirected.
  - Archer Blood, "The Blood Telegram" (U.S. Consulate (Dacca) Cable, Dissent from U.S. Policy Toward East Pakistan (http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/BEBB8.pdf), (April 6, 1971).
- It is a failure not only for the United Nations; it is a failure for the international community. And all of us are responsible for this failure ... it is a genocide which has been committed. More than 200,000 people have been killed and the international community is still discussing what ought to be done.
  - Boutros Boutros-Ghali in speaking of the slaughter in Rwanda, cited in *Awake!* magazine 1994, 11/22.
- Ah, but this time it was not so easy. This time it was not all one way. The Russian Armies and all the peoples of the Russian Republic have rallied to the defence of their hearths and homes. For the first time Nazi blood has flowed in a fearful flood. Certainly a million and a half, perhaps two millions of Nazi cannon-fodder, have bitten the dust of the endless plains of Russia. The tremendous battle rages along nearly two thousand miles of front. The Russians fight with magnificent devotion. Not only that, our generals who have visited the Russian front line report with admiration the efficiency of their military organization and the excellence of their equipment. The aggressor is surprised, startled, staggered. For the first time in his experience mass

murder has become unprofitable. He retaliates by the most frightful cruelties. As his armies advance, whole districts are being exterminated. **Scores of thousands, literally scores of thousands of executions in cold blood are being perpetrated by the German police troops upon the Russian patriots who defend their native soil.** Since the Mongol invasions of Europe in the sixteenth century there has never been methodical, merciless butchery on such a scale or approaching such a scale. And this is but the beginning. Famine and pestilence have yet to follow in the bloody ruts of Hitler's tanks. **We are in the presence of a crime without a name.**

  - Winston Churchill, Broadcast on 24 August 1941 (http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1941/410824a.html)

- How could so many reputable and responsible churchmen have lent their support, even if only passively, to the perpetration of such crimes as genocide? What fever seized so many millions of German Christians, both Evangelical [Lutheran] and Catholic, in those few short years of Nazi tyranny? ... The Church was unprepared and totally unsuited to cope with the situation.

  - J. S. Conway, Canadian historian, raised this question in his book *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches 1933-1945.*

- How could I deny the power of evil when I see what is occurring and what has occurred since I was born: The second world war, with over 40 million victims; Auschwitz and the death camps; the genocide in Cambodia; the bloody tyranny of the Ceauşescu regime; torture as a system of government in many places throughout the world. The list of horrors is endless. . . . So I believe that we are justified in calling such acts 'diabolic,' not that they are inspired by a Devil with horns and cloven feet but by a Devil that is the symbol of the spirit and power of evil operating in the world.

  - Jean Delumeau, historian, replied when asked if he believed in the Devil, cited in *The Watchtower* magazine, 2002, 10/15.

- Sometimes I have feared that, in some wild paroxysm of rage, the white race, forgetful of the claims of humanity and the precepts of the Christian religion, will proceed to slaughter...

  - Frederick Douglass, "The Future of the Colored Race" (http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-future-of-the-colored-race/), (May 1886).

- We filed this case against President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken and Secretary of State [sic] Austin with two claims. One is that they have **absolutely and completely failed in their duty under international law and U.S. law to take all measures possible to prevent the unfolding genocide against the Palestinian population in Gaza.** The United States is a signatory to the Genocide Convention. And in recognition of the severity, that this is the crime of crimes, when it requires the specific intent to destroy a group, a national or ethnic group, in whole or in part, that is such a serious crime that states are obligated to take all measures within their control, all measures possible, from the second, from the minute they learn of the possibility of genocide, to stop that. We have not seen the United States do that, despite its considerable influence over Israel in the form of hundreds of billions of dollars in military aid that it's sent over the decades and billions in the past year. Instead of using that influence to stop the killing, to stop the imposition of a total siege, denying all basic necessities to 2.2 million people in the enclosed space of Gaza, they have rushed weapons. They have given unconditional political support. Up until yesterday, when we saw a Security Council resolution not yet call for a complete ceasefire, the United States had blocked all measures at the international level. So we are bringing the first claim for its failure to prevent the unfolding genocide.

  - Katherine Gallagher, senior attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights as quoted in: "Failure to Prevent Genocide": Biden Sued as U.S. Provides Arms & Support for Israel's Gaza Assault (https://www.democracynow.org/2023/11/16/ccr_genocide), DemocracyNow! November 16, 2023

- **The second claim is that it's actually complicit in genocide. We lay out the case that Israel is actually committing genocide at this moment.** And we are able to do so, unfortunately — it's with no pleasure that we say this — at this early moment because of the very clear statements of intent by Prime Minister Netanyahu, by his minister of defense and other senior Israeli officials about their intentions against the entire population in Gaza. They have been clear that they see this, the people, the children of Gaza, as less than human, describing the population as "monsters" or "human animals," and then taking away all of the basic necessities — food, fuel, water, electricity. **We've certainly, as you just played, heard what has**

happened to the healthcare and medical facilities: bombed and invaded. And so, in the face of all of this, the United States, when it has continued to send weapons, to send military advisers, to rush aid and give moral and political support to Israel's actions, we say it is aiding and abetting genocide.

  - Katherine Gallagher, senior attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights as quoted in: "Failure to Prevent Genocide": Biden Sued as U.S. Provides Arms & Support for Israel's Gaza Assault (https://www.democracynow.org/2023/11/16/ccr_genocide), DemocracyNow! November 16, 2023

- **Here in the United States, the Center for Constitutional Rights has sued President Biden, accusing him of failing to prevent genocide.**

  - Amy Goodman, in: "Failure to Prevent Genocide": Biden Sued as U.S. Provides Arms & Support for Israel's Gaza Assault (https://www.democracynow.org/2023/11/16/ccr_genocide), DemocracyNow! November 16, 2023

- In 1973, CIA-psychological operatives in Chile scrawled graffiti on the sides of buildings that read "*Jakarta se acerca*" – "Jakarta is coming." This was a reference to the massive CIA orchestrated 1965 bloodletting in Indonesia which overthrew Sukarno and made the country safe for US corporations like Freeport Sulphur. The American and Indonesian governments have never acknowledged the truth of those events. But we must confront these sorts of dark truths if we are to move forward as a civilization.

  - Aaron Good, *American Exception: Empire and the Deep State.* Skyhorse Publishing. (2022) p. 290. ISBN 978-1510769137

- Genocide lies at the core of Western imperialism. It is not unique to Israel. It is not unique to the Nazis. It is the building block of Western domination. The humanitarian interventionists who insist we should bomb and occupy other nations because we embody goodness — although they promote military intervention only when it is perceived to be in our national interest — are useful idiots of the war machine and global imperialists. They live in an Alice-in-Wonderland fairytale where the rivers of blood we spawn make the world a happier and better place. They are the smiley faces of genocide. You can watch them on your screens. You can listen to them spout their pseudo-morality in the White House and in Congress. They are always wrong. And they never go away.

  - Chris Hedges, "Exterminate All the Brutes (https://scheerpost.com/2023/10/29/chris-hedges-exterminate-all-the-brutes/)." Scheerpost (29 October 2023).

- We would be deceiving both ourselves and the people if we concealed from the masses the necessity of a desperate, bloody war of extermination, as the immediate task of the coming revolutionary action.

  - Vladimir Lenin, "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising," *Proletary*, No. 2, August 29, 1906. *Lenin Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1965, Moscow, Vol. 11, pp. 171-178 [1] (https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1906/aug/29.htm)

- Overt debates about genocide have been relatively slow in developing, in part because of the creation of a TRC, mandated with collecting the 'truth' about the IRS system while similarly engaging in 'reconciliation' (a contested term) with settler Canadians. While Canada's history wars may seem slow in getting off the ground, the TRC's more 'balanced' approach and wide-ranging engagement with non-Aboriginal societal actors may have a greater effect in stimulating national awareness than in the United States and Australia.

  - David B. MacDonald, "Canada's history wars: indigenous genocide and public memory in the United States, Australia and Canada" (https://tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14623528.2015.1096583?src=recsys&journalCode=cjgr20), *Journal of Genocide Research*, Volume 17, 2015, "Issue 4: Special issue on Canada and Colonial Genocide", (pub. online (11 Dec 2015).

- Israel's president, Isaac Herzog, set the tone as he spoke about how far to assign guilt for the worst single atrocity against Jews in his country's history. **"*It's an entire nation out there that is responsible. This rhetoric about civilians not aware, not involved, it's absolutely not true. They could've risen up, they could have fought against that evil regime,*"** said Herzog. ... In different ways, the sentiment that the Palestinians are collectively responsible for the actions of Hamas in killing of about 1,300 Israelis and abduction of 199 – and therefore deserve what is coming to them – has been echoed far beyond Israel's borders. ...In the US, Senator Lindsey Graham called for the wholesale destruction of Gaza. **"We are in a**

religious war here. I'm with Israel. Do whatever the hell you have to do to defend yourself. Level the place," he told Fox News.
Ariel Kallner, a member of the Israeli parliament for Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, had the answer. He demanded a repeat of the mass expulsion of Arabs in 1948 known to Palestinians as the Nakba or Catastrophe. "*Right now, one goal: Nakba! A Nakba that will overshadow the Nakba of 1948,*" he said. It remains to be seen if that is Israel's plan after it ordered more than one million people to get out of northern Gaza as the military prepares further attacks in addition to the bombing and shelling that has already killed 2,700 Palestinians

  - Chris McGreal, The language being used to describe Palestinians is genocidal (https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/16/the-language-being-used-to-describe-palestinians-is-genocidal), *The Guardian*, (Oct 16, 2023)

- A prominent Israeli journalist and radio presenter, David Mizrahy Verthaim, has called for wholesale bloodletting. **"We need a disproportionate response … If all the captives are not returned immediately, turn the strip into a slaughterhouse. If a hair falls from their head - execute security prisoners. Violate any norm, on the way to victory,"** he wrote on X. Others are looser in their language. **When Israel's defence minister, Yoav Gallant, ordered a "complete siege" of the Gaza Strip with "no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed", he said: "We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly."** Perhaps Gallant only meant Hamas but he didn't say so and that left a lot of leeway for those who would go further. In an echo of the US after 9/11, the Israel Defence Forces posted on X: "You either stand with Israel or you stand with terrorism". Republican congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene tweeted: "Anyone that is pro-Palestinian is pro-Hamas."

  - Chris McGreal, The language being used to describe Palestinians is genocidal (https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/16/the-language-being-used-to-describe-palestinians-is-genocidal), *The Guardian*, (Oct 16, 2023)

- India's 1971 armed intervention in East Pakistan—undertaken for a mixture of reasons—is widely and fairly regarded as one of the world's most successful cases of humanitarian intervention against genocide. Indeed, India in effect applied what we would now call the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) principle, and applied it well.

  - Pratap Bhanu Mehta, quoted from Bass, G. J. (2014). The Blood telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a forgotten genocide. Epilogue

- Dear High Commissioner, This will be my last official communication to you as Director of the New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. ... **Once again, we are seeing a genocide unfolding before our eyes, and the Organization that we serve appears powerless to stop it.** ...
The current wholesale slaughter of the Palestinian people, rooted in an ethno-nationalist settler colonial ideology, in continuation of decades of their systematic persecution and purging, based entirely upon their status as Arabs, and coupled with explicit statements of intent by leaders in the Israeli government and military, leaves no room for doubt or debate. In Gaza, civilian homes, schools, churches, mosques, and medical institutions are wantonly attacked as thousands of civilians are massacred. In the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, homes are seized and reassigned based entirely on race, and violent settler programs are accompanied by Israeli military units. Across the land, Apartheid rules.
This is a text-book case of genocide. The European, ethno-nationalist, settler colonial project in Palestine has entered its final phase, toward the expedited destruction of the last remnants of indigenous Palestinian life in Palestine. What's more, **the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and much of Europe, are wholly complicit in the horrific assault. Not only are these governments refusing to meet their treaty obligations "to ensure respect" for the Geneva Conventions, but they are in fact actively arming the assault, providing economic and intelligence support, and giving political and diplomatic cover for Israel's atrocities.**

  - Craig Mokhiber's Resignation letter (https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/24103463-craig-mokhiber-resignation-letter) to the Volker Turk,United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (28 October 2023)

- It is called a genocide. That's what it was... No other way to describe it and that's the way it needs to be described in the history books. And so I'm here to say the following: I'm sorry on behalf of the state of

California... It's humbling for me, having believed I was educated, to have been so ignorant of our past, to have been so unaware of how ashamed I should be, as a Californian, 5th generation... I'm sorry that we've had generations of your kids and grandkids, your ancestors, that have had to suffer through indignities, lack of capacity, empathy and understanding...

  - California Gov. Gavin Newsom quoted in '*Genocide': California governor apologizes to Native Americans for past violence, USA Today,* Rebecca Morin, (https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/06/19/calif-governor-apologizes-native-americans-past-violence/1505636001/) (19 June 2019)

- In the European century that began in the 1840s from Engels's article of 1849 down to the death of Hitler, everyone who advocated genocide called himself a socialist, and no exception has been found.
  - George Watson, *The Lost Literature of Socialism*, Cambridge: England, The Lutterworth Press (1998) p. 80
  - Note: Watson's views have been criticised as being based on mistranslation and distortion reflecting his ideological bias

- Utopian ideologies invite genocide for two reasons. One is that they set up a pernicious utilitarian calculus. In a utopia, everyone is happy forever, so its moral value is infinite. Most of us agree that it is ethically permissible to divert a runaway trolley that threatens to kill five people onto a side track where it would kill only one. But suppose it were a hundred million lives one could save by diverting the trolley, or a billion, or - projecting into the indefinite future - infinitely many. How many people would it be permissible to sacrifice to attain that infinite good? A few million can seem like a pretty good bargain. Not only that, but consider the people who learn about the promise of a perfect world yet nonetheless oppose it. They are the only things standing in the way of a plan that could lead to infinite goodness. How evil are they? You do the math.
  - Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (2011), p. 328

See also

- Crimes against humanity
- Holocaust
- Armenian genocide
- Assyrian genocide
- Greek genocide
- Genocide of indigenous peoples

External links

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